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# The developmental phases of phases Turkish tale

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## Abstract

Some of the fairy tales narrate the hero from birth to adulthood in a fantastic manner. They talk about the phases of life in an informal way both to the adult and to the child. In this study, the transition of the tale's hero to puberty is examined in the fairy tale "Delibalta" with the support of psychosocial development theory of Erikson and Propp's examination of fairy tale character functions. As a result, it was found out that Delibalta shows basic biological, psychological, social and cultural realities of human beings coded within the speech of symbols which demonstrate a characteristic of fairy tale genre.

**Keywords:** Fair Tales, The Developmental Phases, Erikson, Propp

## 1. Introduction

Most fairy tales talk about reaching maturity as products of collective subconscious. The fairy tale handles initiation (reaching puberty), reiterates the initiation scenario as a model and perpetuates with images. (Eliade, 2001)

According to Campbell, the way of the hero's mythological adventure is "an enlarged copy of the formula which is offered in the rituals of transition: departure – initiation – return" (Campbell, 2000).

The Tale of Delibalta, compiled in Diyarbakır (Yalçın & Aytaş, 2005), is a remarkable example which shows the life circle from utter ignorance to maturity, as shown by Eliade and Campbell. A legend-scientist V. Propp says, "All fantastic tales are bound to the same type in terms of their structure" (Propp, 1985). Propp expresses that the unchanging cycle lies in the hero's function or action, and that these functions are edited with dual contrasts. These contrasts are war - victory, prohibition - transgression, being followed - being helped, punishment – marriage (Propp, 1985). The phases of life, which were shown by Eliade, Campbell, corresponds to the unchanging adventure of Propp's fairy tale heroes. Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development just refers to these phases of life.

## 2. Method

In this study, the aim is to analyse the Tale of Delibalta, with the help of from Eliade and Campbell's opinions with the support of Erikson's theory of social development and Propp's method of tale analysis.

In the tale, each episode corresponding to a psychosocial stage and the elements symbolising these stages are analysed through the words of Erikson and Propp.

## 3. Findings

The tale starts with the *Dispute* which Propp displays; the hero destructs the function of the object which makes up for the deficiency of a family member (Propp, 1985).

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1. The prince dysfunctions the trout that was going to be used for treating the wound in the king's leg; he feels pity for the fish in the jar, breaks the jar with the goldenball in his hand and frees the fish into the river. When the tale starts with the sentence "The king's son had a golden ball in his hand on his way from school, and he played with it" (Yalçın & Aytas, 2005), it is seen that the hero is a child at an age to play games. However, he passes into a different phase of development as soon as he breaks the jar.

2. The hero is punished to death by his father.

3. The Sultan lady, prince's mother, secretly gives a bag of gold to the executioners and saves her son's life.

4. The executioners abandon the prince somewhere far away from the town. Propp calls this leading character of the tale *the victim hero* (Propp, 1985). The hero is fourteen years old when he is punished and has to leave home, because he is a teenager (Yalçın & Aytas, 2005). According to Erikson, man has critical eras in his life and each era harbours a crisis which has to be overcome in order to develop a healthy personality. The crisis in this tale, that is the dispute, is that the hero displays an independent personality and comes out against his father who is a symbol of authority. The dispute of the hero can be explained in terms of the psychosocial depression at the age of puberty in Erikson's developmental phases (Semercioglu, 2001). Development of identity which is accelerated by the disputes leads to the set out of the hero who will find a solution the dispute.

5. The prince goes to an inn, but the inn keeper doesn't give him a room since he is too young. The prince gives some of the gold that his mother gave him to the inn keeper and thus gets a room to stay in. Being a spatial image, *the inn* symbolizes the journey of life as a metaphor in Turkish common language; the life is described as *an inn with two doors*. The individual is *a passanger traveling through these two doors*.

6. The prince goes to the *coffee house* to which the merchants go, he buys fourty mules from them and starts trading. This episode can be paraphrased as having a social environment and getting a job to earn a living. Coffee houses in Turkish culture are the places where people socialize, adolescents do not go to coffee houses and these are the public places where young adults spendtime together. As places well as functioning in accordance with the social structure of their districts, coffee houses are where people adopt daily behaviour patterns and traditional values (Grégoire & Georgeon 1998). The coffee house where the hero goes is a common place for tradesmen, which demonstrates the job he chooses and the class he belongs to. In this episode of the tale, it is seen that the questions "*Who am I? Who do I want to be?*", which are accepted as basic struggles by Erikson, are answered (Semercioglu, 2001). In the progression of the tale, the hero wants the inn keeper to take him to a Turkish bath saying that he is too dirty. *Turkish bath* is a place of socializing in the local culture. It is a place of enjoyment and pleasure as well as cleaning and purification. In addition, in the history of sexuality, Turkish bath is the place where people get to know their own bodies and sexualities (Bardakçi, 2005).

7. In the entrance of the bath lies a huge, frightening creature, but the boy fearlessly goes into the bath stepping on the creature in the entrance. In Turkish tales, bath is the place where the hero comes across disguised fairies, spirits and some grotesque creatures. It's also the place of cleaning, purification, recovery and finding an identity. Turkish baths have a property in Turkish culture as distinguished closed common places. It is a widespread belief in both Asia and Europe that baths are haunted places (Türkan, 2009). In this episode, it can be interpreted that the hero gets acquainted with sexuality in the bath. Delibalta, the grotesque creature becomes a companion to him. The hero is in the process of establishing long-lasting friendships. According to Propp, in this episode the hero meets *The Donor*. The donor in this tale is Delibalta (Propp, 2001) and he will help the hero during his journey.

8. The boy and the creature called Delibalta go to another country to buy trade goods so that they will engage in trade.

9. They take a road which is known as dangerous by the caravans and they spend the night at an inn on that road. While these episodes explain how the hero overcomes difficulties with the help of the strange creature, in fact they portray the evolution of the hero from inexperience to experience, from adolescence to young adulthood. The hero is now at the stage of *young adulthood* as Erikson calls (Semercioglu, 2001).

10. At the in, which nobody stays because of fear, Delibalta meets a blond girl. When he tries to hug the girl, she turns into a pile of gold.

11. The boy and Delibalta settle in a big country thanks to the treasure they found.

12. Delibalta asks the king's permission for his daughter and the boy's marriage. The hero who set off in his teens finds both a job and a wife while entering adulthood. This is the stage which Campbell calls "departure –

initiation – return”, and it matches with Propp’s cycle of “war - victory, prohibition - transgression, being followed - being helped, punishment – marriage”.

13. The king agrees to give his daughter to the boy, but he also warns that his daughter has a curse on her, and whoever marries her dies the first night.

14. Delibalta brings the girl’s to the boy’s house, he tells them that he is going to pass his night with them and he grabs the snake coming out of the sleeping girl’s mouth at night. Thus, *The Magical Agent to Dispel the Evil and Defect* in the introduction of the tale becomes secured (Propp,2001). Leaving the puberty behind, the hero masters difficulties during his young adulthood, becomes experienced and turns back to his hometown bringing the *magical agent* to cure his father’s leg. Thus, the cause of crisis mentioned at the beginning of the tale is removed by *the hero fulfilling his duty* as Propp calls as *The destruction of Devil – The return of the Hero*. Delibalta, at the beginning of the tale, is a fish thrown into the river, a grotesque creature in the bath and the son of the Sultan of Fairies at the end. The hero was sentenced to death but he saved the life of a fish who later turned out to be Delibalta. In return for his favour, Delibalta helps the hero acquire the medicine that will cure his father’s leg. According to Propp’s classification, Delibalta is the *sub-hero* (Propp,2001). However, as for Erikson’s theory, he may be interpreted as *The Ego / identity* which helps the hero solve the problems and overcome the difficulties at all stages during his journey from puberty to adolescence. Erikson’s claims that personality develops in a series of stages in his theory of psychosocial development and calls this as *the principle of gradual development*. This development is universal and hierarchical. It is cognitive, sensitive and social. Ego is made up of body, ideal and identity (Yıldırım, 2011). At the end of the tale, Delibalta cures the king with the help of a snake coming out of the girl’s stomach. Learning all about the truth, the king forgives his son, leaves his crown and the throne to his son and organizes a wedding ceremony that will last for forty days. In conclusion the hero passes from puberty to adolescence fulfilling his duties, satisfying his own needs; he solves the problems of ego identity and overcomes his own depressions (Yıldırım, 2011).

The tale teller calls the hero as *the boy* that is *young man* until the episode of wedding. Only then the hero is called by a name, *Mehmet Shah*. The change in the language of the tale is not coincidental. It culturally and literally implies that the hero is now a young adult who has got out crises successfully and gained an identity. In Turkish folk tales, it is seen that people get their real names after becoming an individual or a social achievement. They get a name that refers to their achievements with a transition ceremony in adolescence. The tale of Boğaç Khan in Dede Korkut Tales tells about the event which gives Boğaç Khan his name; Dirse Khan’s son Boğaç Khan beats a bull at the age of fifteen and merits this name (Binyazar, 2004).

The metaphor of *journey* in the fairy tale is a significant reagent of the stages. The hero travels between cities and countries. The departure from hometown to another city, and from there to another country symbolizes the journey throughout the developmental stages. The hometown is the period between childhood and puberty, another city is the whole puberty, another country is the young adulthood and the return to hometown at the end of the tale is the period of adulthood. The tale of Delibalta, like all the fairy tales, ends well; the father has both recovered and left the throne to his son. The crisis of the father at the beginning of the tale corresponds to the adulthood which Erikson calls as the *stability versus productivity*. The peace and the exchange of duties between father and son at the end of the tale constitutes a clue that both have overcome the crises of transition periods. Propp names this stage as *the recognition of the hero, his wedding and succeeding to the throne* (Propp,2001).

#### 4. Conclusion and Discussion

In this study it is seen that The Tale of Delibalta describes the circle of life. The hero exhibits his achievement of social, sexual and occupational identity stage by stage through his journey. By this way he describes the unchanging circle of psychosocial development stages. The tale of Delibalta codes the basic biological, psychological, social and cultural truths, and uses the characteristics of a fairy tale to verbalize the symbols. The extraordinary tales shown in Propp’s classification have happy endings, in the end the hero develops a healthy ego/identity. The young adult listening to the tale becomes familiar with the adult life circle, an unchanging adventure of mankind; he experiences a period of learning while having fun. In this respect, fairy tales are a kind of teacher to the humanity.

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